

# PRINCIPLE ONE: ORIENTATION & CONNECTIVITY

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING CONNECTIONS

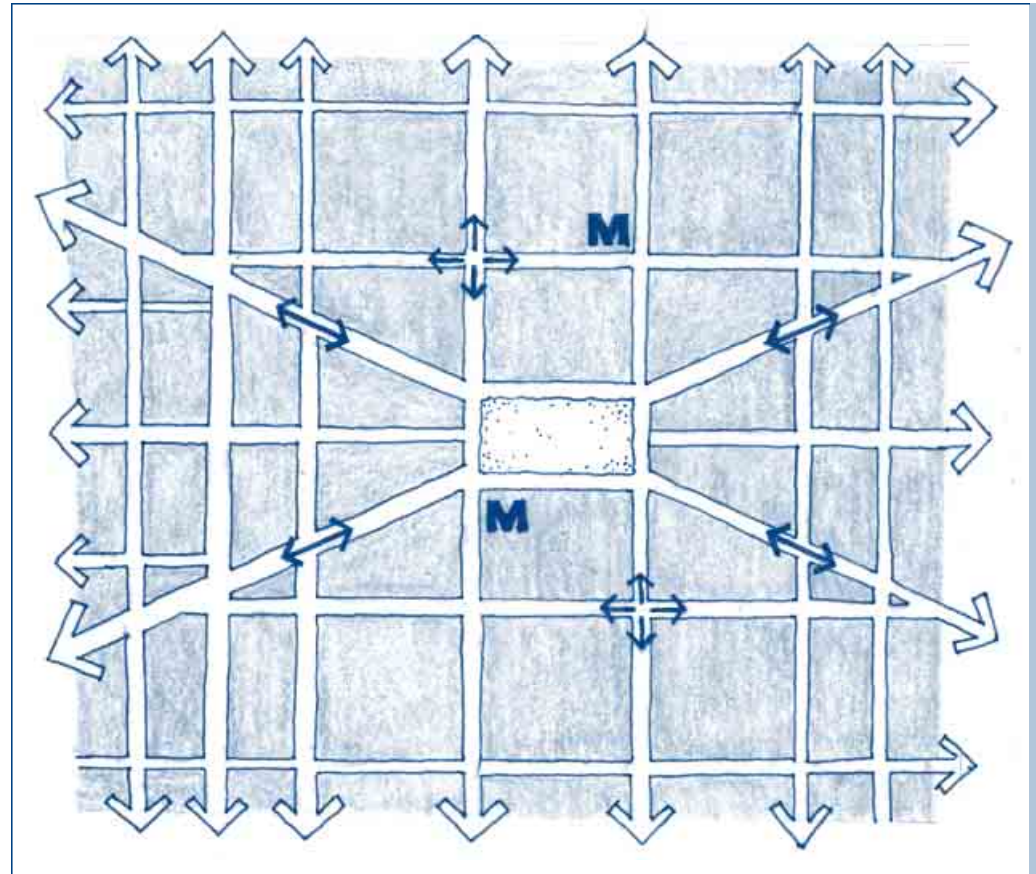


**T**o really be a vibrant node of activity, a neighborhood center must be connected to other destinations in the neighborhood and other opportunities throughout the District and the region. It must be easy to access, accessible through multiple routes and pathways, and serviced by a variety of transportation modes.

### CONCEPTS

*Orientation toward the neighborhood center and connections to and from it...*

- Provides multiple routes to transit and other destinations.
- Creates easy and convenient connections with other modes of travel.
- Enhances sightlines to transit and other destinations to make connections easily visual and logical.
- Minimizes physical barriers to walking and transit use.
- Links neighborhood centers together to maximize access to goods, services and opportunities throughout the region



Washington's traditional street grid is a model of connectivity. All streets converge on a common center and provide easy and logical access across the neighborhood.

## GUIDELINES

Not all neighborhood destinations or amenities can or should be concentrated in the neighborhood center. Schools, large parks, large-scale retail, or low-density residential developments may be more appropriately located outside of the neighborhood center. Access to and linkages between local and regional destinations is important to the vitality of the core transit center.

### A. Provide multiple routes to transit and destinations in the defined center.

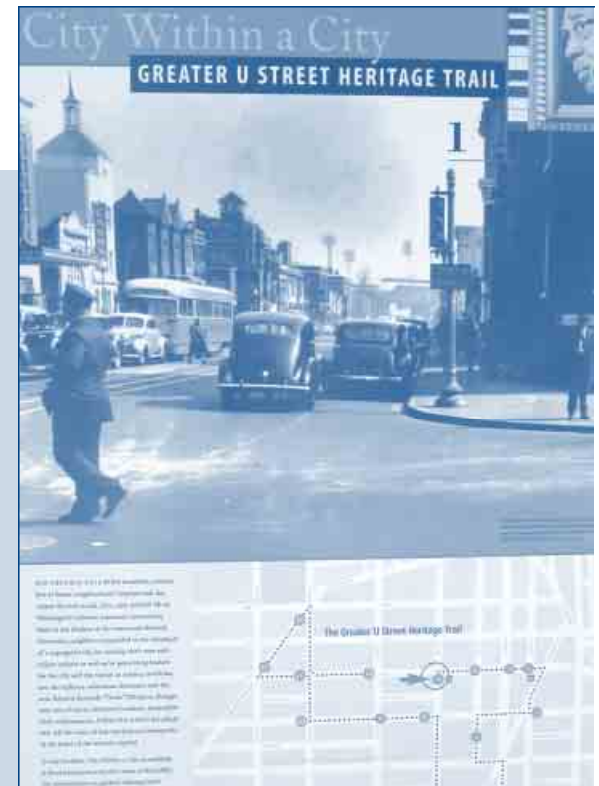
**Neighborhood centers are most successful when they can be accessed easily and logically from many different points in the surrounding neighborhood.**

- Strengthen or reintroduce an interconnected network of streets and pathways.
- Break up “super blocks” with streets or pathways. Blocks of extensive length limit pedestrian movement and convenient access to transit.
- Strengthen or reintroduce a simple street and block pattern radiating from the neighborhood center; avoid cul de sacs, curving roads, or dead ends. Street patterns should be simple and memorable.
- Use the intersection of major streets or pathways as opportunities interesting architecture, uses, or destinations.
- Provide clear, concise, and reliable maps of the neighborhood at transit stops and in other locations in the neighborhood.
- Improve signage to neighborhood destinations such as schools, parks, recreation centers, and historic resources.
- Increase lighting and other safety measures to ensure that a number of different routes provide safe pedestrian pathways to transit and neighborhood destinations.

L'Enfant's historic plan for Washington DC (left) laid out the city in a grid of streets with diagonal connections to other important destinations in the District.



Neighborhoods can take advantage of transit by highlighting easy routes to important local destinations such as historic sites to attract visitors to the community.



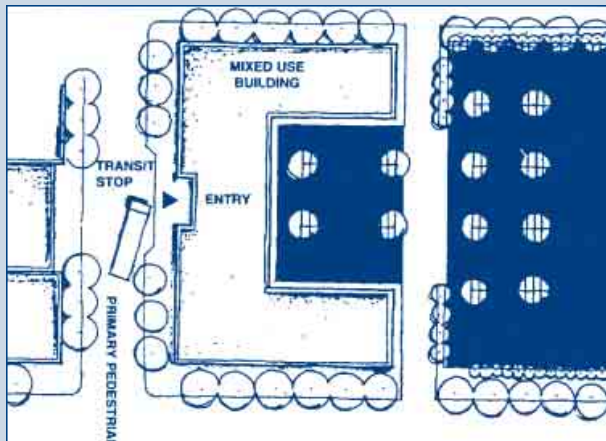
**B. Provide clear connections from transit to other modes of travel including walking, biking, and transit transfers.**

- Design transit-area plazas and public spaces to integrate bus access and transfer points.
- Incorporate bus shelters into public spaces and the architecture of buildings along transit routes.
- Provide safe bicycle facilities close to transit areas, such as lockers and paths.
- Adjust the connection between bus and rail services so that buses do not idle for extended periods or obstruct pedestrian pathways.



Transit centers provide direct access to bus service, major pedestrian routes and neighborhood destinations making transit convenient and easy to use.

Buildings can be designed to incorporate bus stops or other transit amenities into the façade of the building itself to enhance connections to transit.



Neighborhood centers should be designed to facilitate connections between different modes of travel including transit, bike, and auto.



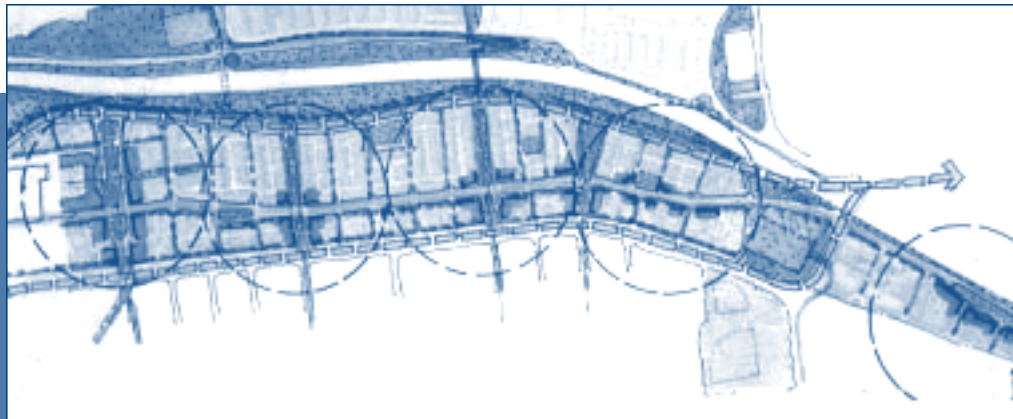


**C. Enhance visual connections across the neighborhood center. Visual connections provide a sense of orientation, entice people to visit the destination, and promote a sense of comfort and safety.**

- Orient public spaces and building entrances to transit facilities to increase access to transit and destinations such as shopping and employment.
- Include public art or other landmarks in transit-area developments to help visitors and residents orient themselves in the neighborhood.
- Maintain straight streets and consistent building setbacks to extend the line of sight for several blocks in many directions.
- Provide direct pedestrian pathways that follow site-lines to destinations.



The transit system provides all residents access to opportunities throughout the metropolitan region.



The proposed Potomac Yards plan in Virginia is an example of a transit corridor with multiple, connected nodes.  
Source: Cunningham + Quill Architects

## REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

Vibrant neighborhood centers that are pedestrian-friendly and connected to transit provide local access to housing, employment and service options. Several unique centers within the District and metropolitan region reduce reliance on automobile travel while creating a system of regional destinations or “nodes of activity.”

The regional benefits of TOD are best recognized through this system of activity nodes. Connected by transit, they provide regional access to services and employment to all citizens, regardless of automobile ownership. In addition, reduced reliance on automobile travel results in improved air quality and less unplanned, dispersed development that relies on auto travel. In this way, TOD holds the potential for local and regional change that can benefit all District neighborhoods and the region.

#### D. Minimize physical barriers to transit use.

- Provide safe, convenient and inviting pedestrian and bicycle bridges and tunnels over/under barriers such as major roadways, railroad tracks, and steep gullies or streets.
- Link development projects to area transportation and circulation plans to ensure consistency.

#### E. Provide convenient, reliable and flexible connections between transit-oriented neighborhood centers.

- Expand transit service to maximize accessibility to neighborhood centers.
- Route transit service to link neighborhood centers with minimal transfers or delay.
- Promote service to the neighborhood center by multiple travel modes including subway lines, direct bus service, and bicycle pathways.



At Rhode Island Avenue, pedestrians cut across railroad tracks adjacent to the Metro Station to take the most direct route home. Improving access is important to encouraging transit use and providing safe routes.



Neighborhood centers should be safe and accessible for all members of the community.  
Source: Washington Regional Network



Public spaces help create an identity for the neighborhood as well as providing comfortable places to sit, visit, and relax.